

Christianity and Crisis

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The Humanist's Religious Quest

INCREASINGLY the need becomes apparent for a clearer definition of religion in relation to contemporary idealisms that claim only secular sanctions but make urgent demands on the consciences of men. In an article appearing in this space a few weeks ago, the present writer suggested that the respect sometimes shown by orthodox Christians for an exponent of secular humanism may be due to the discernment of something essentially religious in an avowedly secular faith. That thought needs to be pursued further if it is to acquire clear meaning. A grievous aspect of current religious thinking is its vagueness. Defenders of the Christian faith are quick to denounce atheism, but many find it very difficult to relegate a person who, while calling himself a naturalist or a humanist—in the common sense of that word—evidences a supreme devotion to values that are cherished by the Christian community. The resulting ambiguity is troublesome to many minds.

This ambiguity is greatly aggravated by the secular humanists themselves. Rejecting the recognized religious faiths, they claim vigorously the right to be regarded as religious. This is, no doubt, evidence of insight into perennial human needs and cravings but it involves humanist writers in no little confusion. We find them, for example, giving enthusiastic support to the current effort to interpret the separation of church and state as requiring absolute separation of *religion* and the state. Religion, they insist, is a private matter. But when they attempt to expound humanism they reverse their position and define religion as synonymous with all the recognized components of the good life. Thus they become involved in complete self-contradiction.

Now it little behooves those who recognize the inescapable paradoxes in the Christian faith to chide others for inconsistencies. None of us avoids troublesome involvement when seeking to unravel the complexities of human existence. But the humanist apologetic seems to have a basic fault.

A writer in the current issue of the *Standard*, organ of the American Ethical Union, undertakes to make the humanist definition of religion explicit.

"Personally," he says, "I reject the fundamentals of Judaism and Christianity as particular religions, but I wish to move forward to find the fundamentals of religion as such. When I reject Judaism or Christianity I do not of necessity reject religion; rather *I go forward to find it, and to find its true fundamentals; and upon these fundamentals I may build a religious system in keeping with the highest intelligence and deepest emotions of mankind.*" And what are these fundamentals? Reference is made to the "liberal religious fellowship" founded by Felix Adler and others as the "first Ethical Society." This religious fellowship was to be one in which "all men and women of good faith and goodwill would wish to cooperate for the common good, in the name of common ideals of an ethical and spiritual sort—*placing faith in man's power, by cooperative endeavor, to achieve a good life, personally, socially, nationally, internationally.* . . ." The writer sums up the matter in a single sentence quoted from A. Eustace Haydon, "One thing is *fundamental* in all religions—the creative drive of human desire for the values of a satisfying life."

It is here suggested that the humanist writer is wrong, but begins by being right. There is something common to all religions. John Dewey's disposition to reject the word "religion" and use only "religions" seems very arbitrary. If one must abandon the quest of religion because all he can actually find is *religions*, the same logic requires him to reject philosophy because all he can find in academic halls or tomes is *philosophies*. This is too facile. Our humanist writer is on a hot trail, but he seems to lose it. By the time he seizes upon the "fundamental thing" in religion it has become something so vague that it scarcely needs a word to define it.

It is to be feared that Felix Adler would not recognize his spiritual progeny. Adler defined the religious faith as a "conviction that life is worthwhile because something is going forward in the universe that is worthwhile." There is a world of difference between that and Haydon's definition. The fault of the latter is not in its inclusiveness but in its exclusiveness. It leaves out the only element

that gives religion a distinctive quality and justifies retention of the word. The writer we have been quoting declares that religion is "the name we give to the dynamic and creative interest in the good." In other words, religious interest is ethical interest. One is at a loss to know why those who are at pains to define religion in a way that eliminates everything that has been immemorably regarded as distinctive of religion, still cling to the word with almost passionate eagerness.

These humanistic crusaders, whose words and works carry many authentic marks of the Judeo-Christian tradition would nevertheless do well to ponder a comment of Professor John Herman Randall, Jr., a philosopher who stands definitely in the naturalistic tradition. "Recent experience," he writes, "has made clear that if a traditional religion disintegrates, men will not calmly proceed to live without any religion at all. A new religion, or, if we prefer, a new substitute for religion, will spring up to fill the vacuum and to perform the historic functions of a religion. And this new 'religion' will be much worse than the old one it supplants. For it will inevitably express some need of the moment; it will be one-sided and fanatical. It will forget much of what has been learned through the bitter experience of generations because it will lack what the great historic religions have received, the criticism and clarification that have been born of centuries of human experience. The new social faiths of Europe reveal their rawness and crudeness at every turn."

Because of their ethical insights and their courageous crusading for social justice and human rights many of those who call themselves humanists may justly claim kinship with the religious tradition of the Western world. Faith in man is indeed an essential of worthful living, but it becomes religious in a meaningful sense only as man is regarded as an instrument, to use Felix Adler's phrase, of "something going forward in the universe that is worthwhile."—F. E. J.

Editorial Notes:

Eleven of the top ranking atomic scientists have proposed a course in regard to the hydrogen bomb which we suggested here two weeks ago. "We urge," declared the scientists in a formal statement, "that the United States through its government, make a solemn declaration that we shall never use this bomb first. The only circumstances which might force us to use it would be if we or our allies would be attacked by this bomb. There can be only one

justification for the development of this bomb and that is to prevent its use."

We believe the scientists have given at least one point of the moral program which must be developed to deal with this new peril to the world and to the moral quality of our civilization. The other was presented by Senator MacMahon in his memorable Senate address in which he declared that we must have an even more adventurous program for the preservation of the health of democratic society throughout the world, in order to avoid the possibility of a war in which such a bomb would be used. He warned against the strategic and moral danger of regarding such a new weapon as adequate defense. Actually the world's apprehensions about our possible use of the bomb will weaken our moral position in the world. We must constantly ward off the danger of making war more inevitable by strategic precautions intended to gain a victory if the war should occur.

The scientists, who made this significant proposal for a covenant, justified it not merely because of its possible effect in allaying world tensions but also as a discipline of self-restraint. "After all," declared one of the scientists, Prof. Allison, "we are a Christian nation with a sense of morality. This is a moral issue and we must resolve not to be the first to use the bomb even though we are criticized for tying our hands."

We believe that it is important for the Federal Council of Churches to call a special meeting, either of its executive committee or of its Commission on International Relations, to deal with this issue. We must not as a church fail to speak at all simply because our counsels are divided, and any such meeting will face the pacifist challenge that the time has now come for the church to sound a simple "no" to all preparations for war.

Those of us who are not pacifists realize that this horrible new weapon merely reveals the ambiguity of all our historic decisions in a new vividness; but it does not alter the total situation. It is now quite clear that we could have made this more lethal bomb four years ago. We refrained for obvious reasons; and the question only became urgent when the knowledge of the Russian possession of the uranium bomb made it certain that it could quickly develop this more deadly instrument.

It is frightening to have so momentous a decision made so casually by one man, even if he is the President of the United States. But it is now quite apparent that, had the issue been submitted to Congress, the same decision would have been a foregone conclusion. No nation will fail to take even the most

hazardous adventure into the future, if the alternative of not taking the step means the risk of being subjugated.

There is no specially Christian quality in the illusion that the power of the human will is more potent against the inexorable forces of history than

it is. Nations do not have the moral resource to risk destruction. But they are not without moral resource. We must exploit the moral possibilities within this situation to the full. The church must give this matter prayerful common counsel and help to guide the conscience of the nation.—R. N.

The Churches in Czechoslovakia*

THE long prepared and widely discussed church-state legislation in Czechoslovakia came into effect on the 1st of November, 1949. Everybody feels that that day will long be remembered in the dramatic history of that Central European country. It really marks an important turning point in the church-state relationship there, though it is not easy for many interested observers to find out where the main changes—when compared with the past—really occur. It is an interesting piece of legislation and worthy of attention. It throws light on the communist way of dealing with the problems caused by the church when they have to deal with them not as ideological theorists but as statesmen concerned with the pacification and consolidation of the regions under their rule.

The Political Issue

Kings and princes with their swords and armies were often more successful in Christianizing Europe than the missionaries with their sermons. And so it happened that the present religious picture of Europe is determined to a greater degree by politics than is often realized. The greater part of the population of Czechoslovakia is today Roman Catholic. It was not always so. But the decisive victory of the Habsburg rulers made it possible, within the first one hundred and fifty years of their undisputed rule in the country, for their Jesuit friends to achieve what would have been impossible without the support of armed force. The Habsburg monarchy, Austro-Hungarian feudalism and Roman Catholicism could hardly have been imagined without each other. The church was the most solid support of the imperial throne; the enemies of one were the enemies of the other and vice versa. Hence the immense privileges of the church, its power, its wealth and its monopolistic rights. The period of Enlightenment, the influence of the French Revolution, the growth of nationalism and other elements made, of course, many inroads into this position, but never without opposition from the Roman Catholic Church and never without many difficulties.

The end of the First World War meant the end

of the Habsburg Empire. In its place emerged a series of independent states. In each of them political Catholicism played an important role, to such an extent that it was almost impossible to see where the priest ceased to act politically and started to practice his religious duties. It is difficult to imagine Dollfuss in Austria, Pilsudski in Poland, revisionism in Hungary, autonomism in Croatia without the respective Roman Catholic Archbishop and political clericalism. Czechoslovakia had its Slovakian autonomism led by the priest Hlinka and Tiso who made it so easy for Hitler to strike his final blow against what remained after Munich. It is true that the Czech Catholics did their best to adapt their policy to that of a liberal democratic state. They created an influential party of the center and later on provided numbers of leaders who either supported Mr. Benes in exile or suffered in concentration camps (Msgr. Beran). Nevertheless their Slovakian colleagues were not of the same type. Even when Hitler's Slovakian puppet state, presided over by Msgr. Tiso, disappeared with the end of the last war, Slovakian political Catholicism remained one of the most difficult and dangerous problems within the recreated Czechoslovakia. It is a fact that the Roman Catholic clergy never gave up their political activity even when their political party ceased to exist and that the pilgrimage processions led by them were primarily political demonstrations. Any government, not only a Communist one, would have had a headache with this problem, which is older than the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

Communists and the Archbishop

Msgr. Beran, the Archbishop of Prague, is a sincere and honest man. He is a good scholar, good patriot and represents probably the best of Czech Catholicism. He is incontestably a democratic personality as well. The task has fallen upon him to represent his church in a revolutionary period in the life of his country. It is a time of deep social change and radical transformation of all the traditional economic and cultural structure of the country. He cannot help representing a church which owes most of its present power, privileges and wealth to its political past and which for this reason, if not for others, is very conservative. He cannot help

* The article on the church situation in Czechoslovakia is for obvious reasons anonymous. It is written by an author in whose judgment we have great confidence, and who has special facilities for securing the facts in the Czech situation.

representing his militant Slovakian colleagues amongst whom Dr. Tiso still lives in spirit if no longer in the flesh. He also cannot help representing the church whose pope does not hide his anti-communist attitude and whose statements are entirely clear in this respect.

The Communists aim at the abrogation of super-wealth and privileges, at the abolition of the liberal political order, at the elimination of the tendencies which they regard as reactionary and therefore dangerous for their plans. They also do not underestimate the influence of the pope in world politics. For these reasons they push forward their issue with the church, are impatient with the prelate and display nervousness and pressure. The discussions between the representatives of the state and the church received much publicity in the world press. Their first round appears to have been closed by the proclamation of the recent law. It was a round which perhaps cannot yet be characterized as a clash between religion and communist ideology but rather as a struggle between a political church and a state. The winner of this round is the state. It remains to be seen what use it will make of its victory and what implications the church will draw from its defeat.

Present Situation

The first step taken by the state against the danger of political activity on the part of the churches was a law dealing with the "defence of the security of the state." Any unfriendly political pronouncement whatever from the pulpits, and any action whatever of the churches which might be understood as a hidden political criticism or attack upon the present regime will be severely punished.

The second step is the new law. Many observers see its revolutionary character primarily in its economic aspect. It is so. But nevertheless it is here that the law respects the basic practices of the past more than it was supposed it would. The churches were always supported by the state in Central Europe. Free churches form such a small percentage in those regions that they hardly appear in the statistics. In liberal, democratic Czechoslovakia the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Slovakian Reformed clergy were all directly on the pay-roll of the state. (This was according to an old Austro-Hungarian system called "congra.") The Czech Brethren Church, the Czechoslovak Church and the Orthodox Church had always received state support in bulk (known as "dotation"). But this was never sufficient to cover their actual needs. In order to supplement the salaries, the Roman Catholics used the revenue from their large estates and other property, stipends and innumerable ancient privileges. The stipends were linked to individual offices and thus there was a large disparity between the salaries of the Roman clergy. The members of the Roman

Catholic Church were never trained to support their church direct. The Protestant minorities and other churches who had no such property (except in some places in Slovakia) had to develop considerable efforts among their members in order to survive. In a similar way the state supported (but never entirely covered) the material and administrative needs of the churches.

The new law abolishes all the old privileges, stipends and revenue-yielding rights of the churches or individual church appointments. The church which is seriously hit by this is the Roman Catholic Church. It loses everything it gained as the result of the victory of the Catholic Habsburgs over the Czech Protestant nobility and cities in the Seventeenth Century. By this measure also for the first time in the modern history of Czechoslovakia the equality of all the churches is achieved. The new law now provides that all the clergy of all the churches are placed on the direct payroll of the state and that their entire salaries are covered by the state. The churches will be helped by the state to meet their administrative and material expenses, but this help will be provided only in so far as the voluntary contributions of their members are not able to meet the expenses of the church. The state requires to be informed of the budgets of the churches and wishes to have complete information of all the churches' property and financial dealings.

In the past the elections or nominations of the clergy had always to be submitted for the approval of the state authorities. If the state did not protest within four weeks, the appointment was considered as valid. The new law requires that the state be informed beforehand about the person to be appointed or persons between whom a selection has to be made. The criteria for the approval by the state are the same as before: state citizenship, civic reliability, moral integrity. The churches' concern is to nominate people who correspond with their ecclesiastical and religious requirements. The law makes provision in the event of a vacant place not being filled in time. It reserves for itself special rights if a candidate for such a place is not nominated within four weeks.

The most important innovation of the law is, however, the declaration that all the previous legislation regarding the place and rights of the churches in the state is abolished. That is really revolutionary. There are no longer any traditions from the past to be called upon, nor ancient practices which could be successfully used as weapons for the defense, nor customs which can serve as solid ground for a possible attack. There is only the declaration guaranteeing the liberty of conscience and faith in the constitution and the new church law. A tradition of relationship between the state and the churches has to be built up from a new beginning. Here is the real importance of the 1st of November, 1949, in

the church history of Czechoslovakia. The churches and the state are starting a new chapter.

The Protestants

Every patient observer of Czechoslovakian problems realizes that the solution was meant to meet the issue of the Roman Catholic Church. The tiny Protestant minorities in the country did not count for much. Their leaders were, of course, consulted as the Catholic leaders were, their arguments were heard, but they were not always met (except on some important points). For many years the Protestants have been preparing themselves for a separation of the church from the state. The only question was whether they were all ready and all equally prepared for it, but this was the solution which they would probably have favored more than the one laid down in the new law. They would have had tremendous difficulties in keeping up their work, and their pastors would probably have had to live as very modest persons, but that is what they had been preparing themselves for and the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren would probably have done its utmost to meet and to welcome such a solution. On the other hand, separation would have materially crippled the Roman Catholic Church, for its members never directly supported its work, relying only on its material wealth, privileges and the state.

Protestantism in Czechoslovakia never represented a decisive political force and it is only in Slovakia where it played a more important political role (conservative). Though there was not so much at stake politically with the Protestants as with the Catholics, they, as a minority, were submitted to the same treatment as the majority.

A question remains to be answered as to whether there was any solidarity between the churches in Czechoslovakia during the long tension accompanying the discussion of the new law. There is no indication that there were discussions between the Catholics and the Protestants. There were, however, discussions between the different Protestant denominations. All that is known about them is that the Protestants had a more or less common policy in their endeavors to prevent the implications of the law harming the internal life of the church. In addition they were not at all happy about their clergy being directly paid by the state, and they did not identify themselves with the Roman Catholics, realizing that political Catholicism linked with the Vatican is an issue entirely on its own.

A Blank Sheet

The new legislation in Czechoslovakia reminds one very much of the similar position in Britain, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Germany. If compared with them it is even more liberal on some points. The point is, however, that it is in a situation different from the others. A state of a new

kind has laid down the rights of the church and provided itself with means by which it can influence the churches. There need not necessarily be anything wrong in this situation. The churches more than once have had their individual worldly temptations and more than once have succumbed to them. Byzantium and Rome in the past furnish much material in this respect. Protestantism in Europe has not always abstained from offering its sacrifices on the altars of the nationalistic gods, and its present repentance for being too bourgeois and for not caring enough for the interests of the poor is self-explanatory.

* * * *

This time a state of a different kind has come into power. How is it going to use it? Is it going to use it against more than the militant political powers of the churches? Is it going to respect what is really the very essence of Christian faith, life and testimony? Victors are often corrupted by their power. Here is the blank sheet which has to be covered with figures.

But it is not only the state who will fill in the figures. It is the churches too. Will they find a way of meeting this type of state without identifying themselves with any political or economic system, without fighting for worldly power, without being bitter over lost privileges, without betraying their Lord? Will they meet this state in full Christian liberty, relying only on their faith in the living Christ, striving for the Kingdom of God and not relying on any other allies and without looking forward to any less important a Kingdom?

The sheet is blank, but those who are going to fill it in have a tremendous responsibility. The Church of Christ has probably not yet suffered a loss, but it may very easily do so.

Christianity in Japan

A Communication

IN this letter we wish to add our opinion on Christianity in Japan from the standpoint of laymen vitally interested and concerned with the present and future of Japan, and the contributions that Christianity can and should make if it is to fill a significant role in the moral and spiritual uplift of Japan. Hence, the following remarks should not be taken as destructive criticisms or merely fault-finding. They are suggested as problems to be met and solved if Christian aims and objectives are to be achieved.

The first is the "foreign," or more accurately, the "American" nature of Christianity in Japan. This is not to cast any reflection upon Christianity in Japan or to speak against the ecumenical movement, but to point out the general impression created here, that an all too overwhelming reliance is being placed even at present, four years after the surrender, upon

American aid, not only materially but also spiritually and morally as well. This is evidenced by the substantial aid received in the rehabilitation of church buildings, Christian educational and welfare institutions, relief for Christian organizations and their activities, the intensified missionary activities and the wholehearted backing, explicitly and implicitly, of the Occupation in fostering and nurturing Christianity. All this is somewhat akin to the frequently mentioned "hot-house" economy so descriptive of post-war Japanese economy. The conclusion drawn from the above is that Christianity in Japan is being nurtured and developed almost solely with outside aid and influence, and that there is very little initiative manifested on the part of native Christians.

The second is the conservative and bourgeois nature of Japanese Christian churches. Japanese churches have definitely created the impression that they stand for certain established social principles. This is partly due to the lack of concrete statement of principles and programs for the establishment of a more just society. Their negative attitude and seeming evasion of pressing social issues leads one to the conclusion that the Christian churches are either for the established order or are merely helpless and thus constitute a negligible force, being dissociated from the moving society and concerned only with their own "inner" group.

The churches seem to be interested in mere numbers and seem to be less interested in the creation of a Christian community. The creation of a more just society is being lost sight of. This is not a *right* or *left* problem in the theoretical or political sense. It concerns the practical application of Christian principles in meeting social problems.

This negative attitude is certainly working against the spread of Christianity in Japan since it tends to alienate certain groups who are desirous of building up a new Japan based in the very principles which Christianity professes. If ever there is a time and need for vital Christian social message and its application, now is the time.

The third is the *a priori* argument that Christianity is the *sine qua non* to democracy and peace in Japan. The danger of such an argument is the difficulty of proving such a statement historically (European) and also it must bear the responsibility of explaining the reverse of the statement, namely, that in the event that Japan is not Christianized, there will be no democracy in Japan. Rather than making such sweeping assertions, the attitude should be to express Christianity in thought and deed.

The fourth is the gradual transplanting into Japan of the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. It will be a sad day for Japan, and for Christianity, if such takes place in any proportions.

And lastly, the cause of Christianity will not be aided in any way, in fact the reverse may result, if in the process of Christian evangelization, it should

result in antagonizing the established religions and cults. These are deep rooted in tradition and cannot be erased by simple methods.

In the light of the points made above, the following statements may be made by way of summary:

1. One hears at times that Japan is wide open to Christianity. This statement is true if it means that the opportunity is there if it is tackled in the proper manner. It does not mean that the people are more eager and willing or ready to accept Christianity any more than heretofore.

2. The Christian church must express its conception and program of social justice. It is not enough to simply state that it is opposed to certain social ideas and movements, or that it represents a vital "third force" which avoids the extremes of the right and left. There is a vital need for some hard thinking about social problems by the church. We need a more vigorous social Christianity. It should not be used merely as a tool to combat certain ideologies, but should be a positive force for the building up of a higher social order.

3. Sectarianism and all that tends to cause a fission in Christianity should be avoided as they will bring confusion and weaken the people's faith in Christianity.

4. Foreign Christian workers in Japan must recognize and be tolerant of the peculiar social traditions and structure of Japanese society and mentality which do not parallel that of other parts of the world in many ways. If these are misjudged and suppressed wrongfully, it might result in much confusion and antagonism.

5. For the sake of the ecumenical movement and to provide helpful guides in their thinking, Christians in Japan should be provided with the world's best literature. These should be translated immediately into understandable Japanese.

6. Efforts must be directed toward elevating the standards of theological seminaries for the training of high caliber pastors and Christian workers, for in the final analysis, the Christianizing of Japan rests upon the shoulders of native Christians.

And finally, a plea to America: We Japanese are searching for spiritual and moral guidance from America. America has more than revealed her superiority in material and scientific development and power and we certainly do emulate her for it. But from there on we are praying and hoping that America will prove her equal greatness in spiritual and ethical realms as well. We hope that from America will arise a spiritual power that will be far greater and stronger than material power for the sake of the peace of the world.

The Japanese look up to you for that type of leadership and then there will be no question about our faith in your leadership.

MRS. MITSUKO SATO.

Tokyo, Japan

The World Church: News and Notes

Bishop Explains Why Church Does Not Condemn Capitalism

Much interest has been aroused throughout France by a pastoral letter in which Roman Catholic Bishop Henri Brault of St. Die declared that "if the church does not condemn the capitalist doctrine, it is because such a doctrine does not exist."

Ordered read in all churches of the diocese, the pastoral was devoted to the church's attitude toward materialism, Communism and Capitalism.

"Capitalism is a fact, a system, not a philosophy or a theory," Bishop Brault declared. "In addition, capitalists have not declared themselves openly anti-Christian."

"However," the bishop continued, "if the church has not officially condemned Capitalism, she has not waited until today to reprove an economic system which has plunged thousands of human beings into acute poverty and immorality and made virtually impossible the exercise of a real Christian way of life."

Recalling Papal encyclicals on social problems, Bishop Brault said that "if the terms of these encyclicals have not been carried out, it is the fault of Christians who are too attached to what they call 'established order.' The fact that capitalists can be given a religious burial, denied to Communists, will not change their fate in the next world if they have sinned against their fellow men."

Bishop Brault said the church has condemned communism by a Papal decree because it is avowedly materialistic and anti-Christian.

"But the label of Communist is often applied too lightly," he warned. "Christians who fight for the working classes, and often priest-workers, are called Communists although they have not abandoned their spiritual faith in the slightest degree. In certain cases, Christian action can be parallel to that of the Communists."—*Religious News Service*

Niemöller Makes New Statement on Communism

Pastor Martin Niemöller, whose recent utterances have created much controversy in German church circles, caused new surprise with a speech in which he was quoted as having said that "if communism should come, the German people will have to put up with it as with Nazism in 1933."

Dr. Niemöller, who is president of the Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau, spoke before a church congregation in Tübingen, American occupation zone.

He said the claim that the church would perish if communism comes is "erroneous."

"The church," he declared, "would have to live differently, but live it would."

Repeating his previous statement that the German people will fight neither against the West nor the East, Dr. Niemöller said that both "western liberty" and "eastern social justice" need to be examined.

He is also quoted as having said, "the Evangelical Church should take care not to wake up one morning in the Roman Catholic Church's lap."

Niemöller Finds No Germans in Berlin

Preaching at a church in Wiesbaden, American zone, Pastor Martin Niemöller said "there are no Germans in Berlin any longer, only Americans and Russians," and thus "World War III has been under way long since on German soil."

Dr. Niemöller asserted that "anyone in Berlin who does not profess to be an American is regarded as a Russian."

Acknowledging that his statements on political issues have been criticized in both religious and political circles, Dr. Niemöller said that "the church has a duty to serve the cause of peace, and I do not care about the criticism of politically-minded pastors."

"After all," he added, "a pastor can give advice to politicians. It would be difficult to find people who have done a worse job than the politicians between the years 1945 to 1949."

Dr. Niemöller's remarks on the Berlin situation brought unfavorable comment in Berlin from leaders of the Christian Democratic Union who said they "regretted" his "lack of insight into the East-West conflict forced upon the city."

The CDU leaders said the overwhelming majority of the Berlin population is "fighting against terror for freedom," and they are not Americans, but Germans "acting on their own rights and for their own cause."

They said this cause "is also an immediate concern of the Christian churches."

German Chancellor Hits Niemöller Statement

In a speech before the lower house of the West German parliament, Chancellor Dr. Konrad Adenauer denounced a recent statement by Pastor Martin Niemöller that the western republic was "begotten in the Vatican and born in Washington."

"Such statements," Dr. Adenauer declared, "serve not only to shake the federal republic's internal political position, but also endanger religious peace in Germany."

Interior Minister Dr. Gustav Heinemann, a member of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID) and president of the EKID Synod, declared that he fully supported Dr. Adenauer's statement.—*Religious News Service*

Chinese Communist Religious Sect Reported Spreading

A religious sect calling itself "Jesus' Family" is spreading "like wildfire" throughout north and north-west China, according to Dr. D. V. Rees, British medical missionary, interviewed in Hong Kong.

Dr. Rees, who had just come out of China enroute to England, said the sect now has some 300 colonies scattered through six provinces.

He expressed belief that the sect, which has its major strength in the countryside, may play a vital role in the rehabilitation of China's war-devastated rural economy.

The principle of self-sufficiency followed by "Jesus'

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Family" adherents, Dr. Rees said, was producing a high order of rural craftsmen.

Started at Ma Chuang in Shantung Province in 1921, the sect flourished in communist territory in early civil war days—a time when other religious groups were fleeing that area.

Dr. Rees said this was true because the Communists could find no fault with the community, every member of which surrenders all his possessions when he joins and thereafter shares everything in common with other sect members. Dr. Rees said the sect was "more communistic than the Communists."

When it was started, the group proposed to establish a cooperative economy which would take care of the needs of its members, and give surplus goods and profits to the poor.

It was founded by a man named Ching Tien-ying, who as a young student turned from Confucianism to Christianity through the efforts of a Methodist school teacher.

Ching, still the leader at Ma Chuang, teaches a primitive type of religion. His followers spend much time in common prayer. They look to heaven for direct intervention in their affairs in response to such prayers, and they are guided by dreams.

Dr. Rees said he had spent the past two years at the

Ma Chuang colony where he had assisted in its hospital. He said the colony produced excellent crops, food, especially fruits, which were plentiful, and a variety of animals and poultry was raised.—*Religious News Service*.

Hungarian Textbooks Interpret Christianity from Marxian Viewpoint

History textbooks now used in Hungary's nationalized schools interpret Christianity from the viewpoint of Marxian materialism. Texts used by students from the ages of 6 to 18 discuss the Christian religion chiefly on the basis of its impact on social evolution.

In a textbook prepared for the first form of high school, which comprises students from 14 to 15, Christianity is called "the greatest and most important socio-religious movement of late antiquity, which grew steadily as the Roman Empire declined."

The textbook, first published in 1949, and reprinted early in January of this year, contains a six-page chapter reviewing the history of Christianity from its beginning to the first Council of Nicaea in 325.

It says that the roots of Christianity went back to the Messianic faith of the Jewish people, according to which God intended to establish a kingdom on earth in which there would be no rich and poor, but in which everyone would be blessed and happy in equal degree.

The text declares that "according to legend," Jesus of Nazareth appeared to preach the gospels to the poor and oppressed. He "turned to the poor with passionate love and threatened the rich with inexorable wrath," it adds.

It was not until the second and third centuries that members of the wealthier classes joined the Christian church, the textbook states, because up till then the Christians' way of life and their primitive Communism had brought them into conflict with the ruling class of the Empire, and so with the State.

Then, the textbook continues, when it eventually became evident that all attempts to prop up the old religion and the old "order" of a society falling to pieces were in vain, "the number of Christians increased year after year, and new believers were recruited not only among the slaves and the poor, but among members of the middle class as well."

"However, when members of the wealthier classes penetrated into the ranks of Christian congregations," the textbook says, "not only their way of life had changed, but Christian doctrines as well. Wealthy Christians had become convinced more and more that they must respect the State and cease to fight against the prevailing, though unjust, social order. Rich people began to use peace-mindedness and long-suffering, preached by Christians, in their own interest."

Finally, the textbook states, the emperors of the declining Roman Empire began to see an associate, rather than an enemy, in Christianity. Gradually, Christianity as an organized church "became a faithful supporter of the oppressing organization of the ruling class for many centuries."

One characteristic of the first form and other history textbooks is that the conventional B.C. (Before Christ) is dropped and B.O.E. (Before Our Era) is used instead.—*Religious News Service*

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